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ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF PROFESSOR JACOB WEINGREEN TO BE  
PRESENTED ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 80TH BIRTHDAY.

Edited by D. R. G. Beattie  
E. A. Russell

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## Foreword

When Dr D. R. G. Beattie, Head of the Dept. of Semitic Studies of the Queen's University of Belfast, approached me to enquire if "Irish Biblical Studies" would wish to be associated with the celebration of the 80th birthday of Professor Jacob Weingreen, of Trinity College, Dublin, I had no hesitation in welcoming the proposal. My only reservation was as to whether a modest journal like Irish Biblical Studies would be able adequately to rise to such an occasion. Dr Beattie, however, reassured me on the matter.

We are greatly honoured in having contributions from renowned Old Testament scholars to make up the two-volume Festschrift, the first to be presented on Professor Weingreen's birthday, the second in October 1988. Though I did not have the privilege of being a student of Dr Weingreen, his name was already a legend among Irish Presbyterian ministry students.

I came to know him in 1971. At that time a number of those interested in fostering Jewish-Christian relations came together, at the invitation of Sister Carmel of Our Lady of Sion, to Bellinter and founded an Inter-Faith group. We were exceedingly fortunate in having Professor and Mrs Weingreen as members of the group. We owed many valuable insights to Doctor Weingreen with his wise counsel and wealth of experience. The group was delighted when with the arrival of Chief Rabbi David Rosen in Dublin, the first Council of Christians and Jews was established in Ireland, something the group had urgently wished and worked for.

It is therefore a very special honour to be permitted a share in this Festschrift and the congratulations and good wishes to Professor Weingreen. May I also express my appreciation to Dr Beattie who has kindly consented to be Joint-Editor of this tribute? Without his guidance and help the task could not have been completed.

Edward A. Russell

# TABULA GRATULATORIA

following former students and friends of Jacob Weingreen  
nd to him their warmest congratulations and heartfelt  
wishes on the occasion of his 80th birthday

ia Abrahamson	Joseph Miller
l Allan	David Muir
Bartlett	Thomas Murphy
l Bates	John Neill
k Beattie	William Neill
Bernstein (nee Gilbert)	Ernest Nicholson
k Boden	Bill Osborne
Browne	John Paterson
Buckman	David Payne
ie Calmonson	Samuel Poyntz
n Campbell	Benjamin Pratt
rt Carroll	Ted Russell
n Cathcart	Robin Salters
rt Creane	Cecil Sanderson
Crooks	Raphael Siev
a Elliott (nee Winton)	Douglas Sirr
rt England	Alex Smith
ie Forrest	Hall Speers
rt Forrest	Rosalind Stein
le Golding (nee Elliott)	(nee Druker)
se Gordon (nee Brandon)	Edgar Swann
ard Greenwood	Patrick Vaughan
ond Harman	Sean M. Warner
ce Herman	Charles Whitley
Hutchinson	Josh Wilkins
ence Jacobson	Michael Withers
en Jones	Vernon Young
Kennedy	
el Kennedy	
Kerr	
e Lunn	
y McCann	
ey McIvor	
d McLean	
n Maxwell (nee Cathcart)	
w Mayes	
el Mayes	
le Menton (nee Miller)	



A bibliography of the published writings of  
Professor Jacob Weingreen

compiled by  
E.J.W.McCann

Some twenty years ago, like several generations of students before me, I first climbed to the top floor of East Chapel to begin the study of Hebrew. The scene in the room is easily recalled. In the middle stood a blackboard and easel, beside it a large and sagging armchair, scattered around the room on various tables lay books, papers, and assorted archaeological artefacts, on the wall a cast of (I think) the Moabite Stone, and waiting to greet us, spectacles perched on his forehead, his gown about his shoulders and pipe in hand was Professor Weingreen. He was the first professor I had ever met, and to this day he remains the perfect embodiment of all that that title signifies. With infinite patience and encouragement he began to show us how, in the words of the preface to BDB, we might "unlock the rich treasure-house of the Old Testament". In all the hours spent in that room I cannot recall him once despairing of us however dull our wits or clumsy our work.

Being a small School there was none of the rigid division into year groups as was common elsewhere in the University. Rather, from Junior Freshman to Senior Sophister we mixed freely together, whether in the Oriental Languages Society where we were encouraged to follow our own lines of enquiry and widen our knowledge of the ancient world, or on those occasions when Professor and Mrs Weingreen used royally to entertain us to tea at their home.

In preparing this bibliography of his published writings I am pleased to be able to offer him some small token of the debt I owe him for the example of humanity and scholarship he set.

\*\*\*\*\*

Among his many works it is of course his Grammar for which he is best known. First published in 1939 with a second edition in 1958 it has been reprinted thirteen times and no fewer than 103,350 copies have been issued. In almost fifty years it has never been out of print. Similarly its companion, Classical Hebrew Composition, has been used wherever a solid grounding in the structure of the language has been recognised as an essential basis of biblical study.

His other publications embrace a wide range of topics, although one predominates; that of the continuity of tradition from Old Testament to early rabbinic times. In 1976 several of his major papers on this theme were brought together and re-edited in From Bible to Mishna. In the list which follows I have indicated this where appropriate.

In attempting to record almost half a century of work published in many different places I cannot claim to have included everything, and I have made no attempt to list Professor Weingreen's many book reviews. It is my hope that this may nevertheless serve as an interim bibliography and that Professor Weingreen may enjoy many more years of fruitful work.



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## THE TEXTUAL TRADITION OF TARGUM RUTH: SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

D. R. G. Beattie

The following paper is a revised version of one which I read at the Third Congress of the European Association for Jewish Studies, held in Berlin 26-31 July 1987. I have great pleasure in dedicating it now to my teacher, colleague, and fellow participant in that historic conference, Jacob Weingreen, on his 80th birthday.

עד מאה ועשרים!

\* \* \*

The text of the Targum of Ruth (hereafter: Tg. Ruth) is remarkably stable. While there are differences in wording between one manuscript and another, the student is not immediately confronted, as he may be in dealing with other targums, by any major issue of deciding on the relationship between widely differing versions. It is this stability which prompted me to embark on an examination of the textual tradition in order to discover what may be learnt from the variations which do occur.

The first discovery I made was that much of the work which has been done already must be checked carefully or, indeed, done again, before any progress can be made. Two critical editions of the Targum of Ruth have been published, one by C. H. H. Wright<sup>1</sup> in 1864 and one by Etan Levine<sup>2</sup> in 1973.

Wright reproduced the Aramaic text found in the London Polyglott (1656), and, in a critical apparatus, he noted variant readings - many of them merely variants in vocalization - found in the Antwerp (1570) and Paris (1629) Polyglotts, Buxtorf's Biblia Rabbinica (1620), and Bomberg's Second (1525) and Third (1547-9) Rabbinic Bibles (these are labelled by Wright Bomb. (1) and Bomb. (2), respectively, which is a little confusing). He also recorded variants from the 14th century Dresden manuscript (Fleischer 442, Kennicott 598), which is now extant only in the form of a carbon block, and it is on this account that his work is most valuable.

In order to assess Wright's reliability as an editor I



have compared his text with that in the London Polyglott, and I have checked the variants attributed by him to Buxtorf with Buxtorf's text. In Wright's Aramaic text I have found one error (the transposition of two words, and incidentally the corruption of a *he* into a *tav* in one of those words, in 3:8). The other differences between Wright's text and the London Polyglott are (1) that in two places (1:22, 4:22) Wright wrote in full two words which had been abbreviated in Walton's text by the omission of a final *alef*, and (2) that Wright introduced many more pairs of square brackets to mark the Targum's additional material: Walton had used only nine pairs of brackets, Wright marked everything. What Walton's purpose was in making these markings is obscure: Wright's work was plainly one of supererogation. I say nothing of subsequent developments along these lines by Sperber and Levine. As for the variants noted by Wright, I have found that of twenty-three readings attributed to Buxtorf, only twelve are correct. In nine other cases Buxtorf has the same reading as Wright's text, and the remaining two I have not found. It must, however, be said that all of these variants relate only to vocalization, and my feeling is that, while Wright's work must be treated cautiously in matters of minutiae, on the whole it is probably reliable and this would apply to his reading of the Dresden manuscript.

Perhaps I might here introduce one of the mysteries I have encountered in the course of my study, the mystery of the Yemenite recension. Van der Heide, who detected indications of a 'more or less independent recension of the Targum of Ruth' in the older Yemenite manuscripts, suggested that 'this Targum is also present in Western manuscripts (notably in the Dresden manuscript (Kennicott 98, now lost), see Wright, XXVIII-XXX)'.<sup>3</sup> Now, I must admit that having so far examined only one Yemenite manuscript (British Library Or 2375, of which more anon) I am not in a position to comment on van der Heide's general suggestion of an independent Yemenite recension of Targum Ruth, but I am puzzled as to how this independent Targum can be said to be present in the Dresden manuscript which, as I understand from Wright's notes, was practically identical to the Vatican manuscript Urbinas I, which is widely accepted as a prime specimen of the Western tradition. There are about ten places where the two

manuscripts agree together against all other texts, the most significant point of agreement being in their reading ביסרי, albeit with slight differences in orthography, instead of מימריה, in 3:8. In two places marginal notes in the Dresden manuscript have the effect of adapting a text in agreement with Urbinas to conform with the reading found in other texts.

Levine took as the base text for his edition the Vatican manuscript Urbinas I, which he transcribed fairly accurately, and in a critical apparatus he noted variant readings from seven other manuscripts and two printed editions. However, a clear warning about the accuracy of his work is sounded on the very first page of his edition when three sigla (B, R, J), which do not feature in his list of sigla (reproduced below), make their appearance in the apparatus.

### Levine's Mss. and their Sigla

- A - Rome, *Angelica Ms. Or.* 72,2 (1326 A.D.)
- Bo - Bodleian, *Ms.* 174,3 (*Hunt.* 399; *Uri.* 44) (15th C.)
- Br - Breslau, *Codex Heb.* 1 (14th C.)
- H - Hamburg, *Levi* 19,4 (1310 A.D.)
- K - Copenhagen (*Kongelige Bibliotek*), *Cod. Hebr.* 11 (1290 A.D.)
- L - Lagarde, P. de *Hagiographa Chaldaice* (ed. 1873 A.D.)
- M - London, British Museum *Ms. Or.* 2375 (15th C.)
- S - Jerusalem, *Ms.* 8860 (*Sasoon* 16:282) (12th C.)
- U - Vatican, *Urbinas Ebr.* 1 (1294 A.D.)
- W - Walton, B. (ed.) *Biblia Sacra Polyglotta* (1655 A.D.)

Here we embark on a tale to rival the episode of the siglum S in Levine's edition of Targum Lamentations.<sup>4</sup> I think I can explain J: it must be a typing error for K. I must admit here that I have not yet examined two of the manuscripts on Levine's list (A and H), but of the six which I have examined the Copenhagen manuscript (Levine's K) is the only one which has the reading attributed by him to J. B and R are not so easily explained, unless it be supposed that both have arisen by meiosis from Br, but the Breslau manuscript (i.e. the Breslau manuscript which I have read) has גידיא, not the גידיא, which Levine attributes to B and R. However, Urbinas, as I read it, has גידיא, in the first place, or, to put it another way, whether the letter between



the *gimel* and the *dalet* is a big *yod* or a small *vav*, it is the same in both words. That is to say, it may be possible to read either נגיד נגידא or נגוד נגודא; Levine read נגודא. The question of choosing between the two possible ways of reading the phrase is really too trivial to pursue, but a major mystery surrounds the Breslau manuscript.

Let me say, first of all, that I have been unable to locate a manuscript which corresponds to the description given by Levine. What I have found is the Wrocław University manuscript M 1106 which is no.1 in Brockelmann's catalogue of Oriental manuscripts in the University of Breslau, and which might therefore appear to be the manuscript used by Levine. However, this manuscript has a colophon, in which the *nakdan* Joseph ben Kalonymus names the scribe as his cousin Meshullam ben Joseph and gives the date 1238; how that could have been misconstrued as '14th century' is beyond my comprehension. The sheer quantity of differences between what I find in that manuscript and what Levine reports as representing readings in Br might suggest that two different manuscripts are involved, but this is by no means conclusive. I have found Levine to be in error in his readings at many points where the identification of the manuscript is not in question. The most significant argument for the identity of Levine's Br with M 1106 is this: if they are not the same, why have I not found Levine's manuscript and why did he not use mine?

Before leaving Levine's list of manuscripts we may note two further curiosities. One is the admittedly minor anomaly of using Bodleian as though it were a placename. To have written 'Oxford, *Bodleian*' would not only have been more correct, it would have produced the siglum O and avoided the nuisance of two similar sigla. (The correct signature for this manuscript, by the way, is *Hunt*. 399. The other references are superfluous.) The other oddity is in the description of the Sasoon manuscript. To begin with, the manuscript is not in Jerusalem, but in London. Secondly, the reference 8860 is the catalogue number not of the manuscript but of its microfilm in the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts in the Jewish National and University Library at Jerusalem. The proper reference number for the manuscript is 282 (by itself); 16 is a

catalogue page number.

I think enough has now been said of Levine to indicate that his edition of Tg. Ruth is as useless as his editions of anything else: let us move on to other things. First I must supply some explanatory notes to my manuscript citations (listed below). In referring to the various manuscripts, I employ Levine's sigla, plus D for Dresden, Ant. for the Antwerp Polyglott, and P for the Paris Polyglott. I know these latter three only from Wright. Furthermore, L should be understood to indicate not only Lagarde but the 'received text' as found in Miqra'ot G'dolot, Sperber, etc., while 'printed edd.' indicates L plus the polyglotts. Finally, when two or more manuscripts are grouped together, I have ignored minor variations in orthography.

Sasoon 282, the earliest of the six manuscripts which I have examined (seven, if we include the Dresden manuscript as it can be reconstructed from Wright), has the shortest version of the targum, and it might be a reasonable hypothesis that it represents a relatively early stage in the development of the tradition. When the material omitted, relative to longer texts, is from targumic plusses (these omissions consist generally of a word or so at a time: there are perhaps two dozen of them), it could easily be because these had not yet been added to the tradition. In fact, that is the most plausible explanation. When it omits words or phrases from the original Hebrew,<sup>2</sup> this is done without detriment to the coherence of the narrative; the translation is simply different from that seen in other texts. Both of these features may be illustrated by reference to the first half of 1:1. 'In the days of the judges' is a good translation of the Hebrew which avoids the literalism encountered in all other texts (or perhaps we should say the midrashic interpretation of most texts, for it is only in the London Polyglott and in Buxtorf that we find the infinitive of MT represented by an infinitive in the Targum). In S, the 'famine' had not yet become a 'severe' one (nor had it in Br), while the identification of 'the land' as 'of Israel' may possibly have been squeezed in as an afterthought; certainly, the abbreviated ויך is squeezed in at the end of a line, in a space smaller than many which were left blank

The next omission of MT material is one that S

shares with all the other manuscripts. That is the word Ephrathites (1:2). In the received Aramaic text as found in the printed editions (with the exceptions of the Antwerp and Paris Polyglotts) there are two words, אפרתי רבני, and Churgin<sup>6</sup> reckoned this as one example of what he described as double translations in which, for the most part, an earlier and a later translation are discernible. In this instance he treated the second word, רבני, as an explanatory gloss on the, presumably original, rendering אפרתי. However, the fact that all manuscripts (and Ant. and P.) read אפרתי רבני alone suggests that this was the original translation and that אפרתי was, so to speak, restored to the text at a secondary stage.

S may also throw some light on the history of another of Churgin's double translations, at 2:11. Here Churgin correctly identified the reading of the received text as a double translation of the Hebrew, the first part, 'your god and your people', being a midrashic rendering while the second, 'your father and mother', is literal. In S we find only the midrashic rendering. The literal reading is added in the printed editions, while further expansion occurs in other manuscripts and in the Antwerp Polyglott.

We should, perhaps, note here that while it may be said, in general, that Churgin's double translations are a phenomenon of the printed texts, some double readings are found in the manuscripts, for example at 3:18, where the older manuscripts have what must be a corruption in the first part. (The variant reading which Levine attributes to S might offer an explanation for this strange reading, if it were found to exist.)

Stepping back to 1:16, we encounter the one case where the omission by S of a word from MT can hardly be overlooked or attributed to a policy of creative translation on the part of the meturgeman. Not only does the omission of 'your people' deprive the targumic expansion of half its foundation, the participle נטרי really does need a subject.<sup>7</sup> Yet, I do not feel that this case presents a serious impediment to my general proposition that in S we find indications of a translation of the Hebrew which is free from the slavish literalism of later texts.

That proposition receives support from the two



remaining passages which I propose to examine. In 3:1 the situation is not so much that S has omitted something as that it has given a rather free translation. Approached from another angle, it can be seen that the longer text of other manuscripts has, in addition to a translation of MT, the words 'I shall not rest until the time that ...', which are already in S but are without any kind of warrant from MT. In other words, it is hard to see these words as a supplement to an earlier, more literal translation. However, if we consider S's version to be the earlier one (and the version of D is essentially the same), with its one case each of 'resting' (though here it is a verb instead of the noun of MT) and 'seeking' (I would propose to read דִּיתַבֵּעַ, in S, as דִּיתַבֵּעַ, i.e. as 1st person singular, as in D) it could be considered a free, or imaginative, or, depending on one's viewpoint, a careless or clumsy, translation of the Hebrew, and the addition of נִיחָא in the other manuscripts is, like אִפְרָתִי in 1:2, a case of the restoration of a word which was thought to have been omitted at the earlier stage.

If this suggestion seems tortuous, the similar situation in 4:4 is straightforward. The simple explanation for the different Aramaic versions here is that in S 'those who sit' was translated as 'the Court of the Sanhedrin', and a literal translation of the Hebrew was subsequently added, with the further addition of 'the gate' as in the Rabbinic bibles and Walton.

Before leaving S we may note that despite its relative brevity it has more unique readings (about half a dozen) than any other text. Most of these are trivial enough: e.g. using the root נָטַל instead of נָטַל for 'they took' in 1:4; reading 'house of Moab' for 'daughters of Moab' in the same verse, but conversely reading 'children of Israel' for 'house of Israel' in 1:6. However, in 3:8, where all other texts say of Boaz that 'he suppressed (כָּבַשׁ) his desire', S has the verb תִּקַּח which, while it may have a similar meaning, might allow the phrase to be construed as meaning 'his desire grew strong'. I must say, I find this possibility of a slightly different understanding of the scene intriguing.

To turn, now, to the other manuscripts, the well-known Or.2375 (to which I refer, following Levine, as M), is one of the most recent and the only Yemenite manuscript amongst the six. For Ruth it is seriously

defective: 1:5-2:3 and 2:13-22 are missing in their entirety (although Levine was apparently able to divine what it said or didn't say at a couple of points within these blocks), while 1:2-4; 2:11; 3:9,11,14,16 and 4:10 have all suffered some damage (I speak here only with reference to the Targum and not to the Hebrew and Arabic texts). The other manuscripts do not, to my mind and at the present moment, display any obviously distinctive features (apart from the agreement of D and U against the others, on which I have already commented), but some general observations may be made about them as a group.

In many places all the manuscripts agree together against the printed texts of the Rabbinic bibles and W. Two examples may be seen in the extract from 4:4 given below (the manuscripts and printed texts have a different verb 'to buy'; 'gate' occurs only in L, W). Another, perhaps more significant example occurs in 2:16, where the Rabbinic Bibles and Walton render the hapaxlegomenon הצבתים as אסיריא, presumably meaning 'bundles, sheaves', whereas all the manuscripts and Ant. and P read עתריא 'pitchforks'. The latter reading seems to me to be a genuine old targumic rendering of the biblical hapaxlegomenon which probably antedates its explanation on the basis of m.Erub. X 1, as found in Rashi *et al.*

It may be noted that in these places Ant. and P side with the manuscripts as opposed to the other printed editions, but sometimes they are split between the two camps (e.g. in 2:7, Ant. reads כאן, 'here', with the manuscripts, while P. reads כעו, 'now', with L and W), and in one place at least they go their own way (e.g. in reading שכיבא instead of מיתא in 4:5).

A certain tendency may also be observed for the earlier manuscripts to agree together against the later ones (especially Bo) and the printed editions. We have already seen one example in 3:18, where all the older manuscripts have the corruption אבית דינא. There is another nice example in 3:13 where, in the older manuscripts, the Targum treats the Hebrew טוב as a proper noun and the subject of the verb 'if he will redeem you' (though we should note that the translation 'good, let him redeem' is also present; this is another example of double translation occurring in the older manuscripts). In Bo and the printed editions this

midrashic misreading of the Hebrew text (also attested in Ruth Rabbah 6:3) has been removed, 'the man' being substituted, while M conflates the two readings.<sup>8</sup> It is perhaps also worth noting, although I have not yet made a careful study of linguistic differences in the manuscripts, that the Palestinian verb נמנ of the earlier manuscripts also appears in M but gives way to the Onkelos-type נמנ in Bo and the printed texts. However, a nice illustration of the confused linguistic situation arises in K, which reads נמנ here, but has נמנ in the previous verse.

There are, of course, some exceptions to these general trends, e.g. in 1:1, where K, an early manuscript, agrees with the printed editions against all the other manuscripts in adding 'Judah' after 'Bethlehem', or 2:13, where S is in agreement only with Bo and W in reading the preposition ך as opposed to ך, but these are hardly of great significance.

The conclusions I draw from this study are these: At the earliest stage in the development of Tg. Ruth, which is discernible in S, there was a dynamic translation in which various words and phrases of MT were not represented literally. At this stage all the substantial targumic exegeses were already present. Later, two developments occurred: the targumic expansions were further incremented and the text was modified to make its translation conform to MT, both by the restoration of words apparently omitted at the earlier stage, which often resulted in double translations (this process had already started by the time of S), and by revising the translation in accordance with current understanding of the meaning of the Hebrew. The culmination of both processes occurred in the London Polyglott. However, some specimens of non-literal translation have endured throughout as the only translation of the Hebrew, a notable example being in 3:9, where Ruth's words 'Spread your wings (or skirt) over your maidservant' are rendered 'Let your name be called over your maidservant by taking me as a wife'.

The results of this study are thus fairly limited, but they are sufficiently positive to suggest that the undertaking has been worthwhile and to give me encouragement to persevere. The need remains for a proper critical edition, utilizing many more manuscripts, which



may verify or negate my initial impressions.

## Texts

Ruth 1:1

MT	ויהי בימי שפוט השפטים ויהי רעב בארץ
S	והיה ביומי נגידא והיה כפנא בארעא דיש
Br	והיה ביומי נגיד נגודא והיה כפין בארעא דישראל
K,U,D,Bo,M	והיה ביומי נגיד נגידא והיה כפן
L,Ant,P	תקיף בארעא דישראל
W	והיה ביומי מגד נגידא והיה כפן תקיף בארעא דישראל

Ruth 1:16

MT	עמר עמי
S	אמרת רות מה דנטרין אהא נטר' כאילו הוו עמי מן קדמת דנא
Br,K,Bo	אמרת רות מה דנטרין עמר אהא נטרא כאילו הוה עמי מן קדמת דנא
U,D	אמרת רות מה דנטרין עמר אנטור אהא נטרא כאילו הוו עמי מן קדמת דקנא
Printed edd.	אמרת רות מה דנטרין עמר אהא נטרא אנא כאילו הוו עמי מן קדמת דקנא

(M defective)

Ruth 2:11

MT	ותעזבי אביר ואמר
S	דשבקת דחלתך ועמר
Br,U,D,Bo,Ant	דשבקת דחלתך ועמיר ובית אביר ואמר
K	דשבקת דחלתך ועמיר ובית אב'
M	(שבקת) דחלתך ועמיר ובית אביר ובית אמר
P,W,L	ושבקת דחלתך ועמיר אביר ואמיר

Ruth 3:1

MT בתי הלא אבקש לך מנוח אשר ייטב לך.  
 S ברתי בשבועה לא אנוח עד זמן דיתבע לך דיוטיב לך  
 Br,K,Bo,M ברתי בשבועה לא אנוח עד זמן דאיתבוע לך  
 נייחא דייטיב לך  
 U ברתי בשבועה לית אנא אניח עד זמן דאתבע לך נייחא די  
 ייטב לך  
 D ברתי בשבועה לית אנא אניח עד זמן דאתבע לך דייטב לך  
 Printed edd. ברתי בשבועה לא אניח עד זמן דאתבע לך  
 נייחא בגין דייטב לך

Ruth 3:13

MT אם יגאלר טוב יגאל  
 S,Br,K,U,D אם יפרקינך טוב דחמי למפרקך מו אוריתא  
 הרי טב ויפרוק לחיי  
 M אם יפרקיניך טוב גברא דחמי למפרקיך מו אוריתא  
 חלא טב ויפרוק לחיי  
 Bo, אם יפרקינך גברא דחוי ליה למיפרקיך מו  
 Printed edd. אוריתא הרי טב ויפרוק לחיי

Ruth 3:18

MT איר יפל דבר  
 S אבית דינא דתגור מו שמיא ואכדיו יתפרש פתגם  
 Br אבית דין יתגור מו שמיא ואכדיו יתפרש פתגם  
 K אבית דין דתגור מו שמיא ואכדיו יתפרש פתגם  
 U אבית דין דיתגור מו שמיא ואכדיו יתפרש פתגם  
 D אבית דין דתיגור מו שמיא ואכדיו יתפרש פתגם  
 Bo,M, אכדיו יתגור מו שמיא ואכדיו יתפרש פתגם  
 Printed edd.  
 (Acc. to Levine S has (אבית עד די תדעיו דתגור ...

Ruth 4:4

MT

קנה נגד הישבים ונגד זקני עמי

S

וזכו כל קהל בית דינא דסנהדרין ולקביל סבי עמי

Br.K,U,D,

וזכו כל קביל יתבי בית דינא דסנהדרין

Bo,M,Ant,P.

ולקביל סבי עמי

L,W

קנה כל קהל יתבי תרעא דבית דינא דסנהדרין וכל

קהל סביא דעמי

## Notes

1. C. H. H. Wright, *The Book of Ruth in Hebrew and Chaldee*, London 1864.
2. E. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Ruth*, *Analecta Biblica* 58, Rome 1973.
3. A. van der Heide, *The Yemenite Tradition of the Targum of Lamentations*, Leiden 1981, p.25, n.66. In the course of the discussion which followed the reading of this paper, Prof. van der Heide explained how he reached his conclusion, adding that he no longer believes that an independent Yemenite recension of Tg. Ruth can be distinguished.
4. See P. S. Alexander, 'The Textual Tradition of Targum Lamentations', *Abr-Nahrain* XXIV (1986) p.5.
5. The only omission of this kind which will not be considered below is the loss of 'to him', following 'they said' in 2:4.
6. P. Churgin, *תרגום כתובים*, New York 1945, pp. 140ff.
7. Although I cite three versions of the Targum in addition to S, no great significance attaches to these: a personal pronoun is added in the printed editions, while U and D have incorporated a double reading.
8. Two further examples could be mentioned of the tendency for the earlier manuscripts to agree together against Bo and the printed editions. After 'let it not be known' in 3:14 the printed editions and Bo add 'to any man' (לגבר; M is defective, but probably did not have this word), while in 4:11 they restore the phrase 'who is coming into your house', which is omitted by all other manuscripts, including M.



Robert P. Carroll

Jacob Weingreen, both in his teaching and his writings, always insisted on the principle that there was no fundamental difference between what went on in the biblical text and what was done in relation to that text in extra- and post-biblical literature. That is, both sets of literary activity were involved in the business of interpreting texts and in teasing out the meaning of the material. Thus within the Hebrew Bible are to be found commentary and exegesis, interpretation and midrash and so there is a continuum of focus and activity in the Bible and the literature inspired by it. Hence scholars and theologians who insisted on a sharp distinction between text and commentary or on a canon of the Bible as opposed to non-canonical writings were both wrong and confused as to the nature of the activities which produced the biblical and post-biblical literature. Weingreen's own adherence to this principle of understanding the Hebrew Bible is well demonstrated in his writings on the rabbinic style in the Bible itself and his emphasis on the continuity of tradition. These are most usefully gathered together in his book From Bible to Mishna (1976). But however novel his approach may have been in the great days of Weingreen the teacher (1950s-1960s), it is now a well established principle and practice in current biblical scholarship. Perhaps the best and most comprehensive statement of this approach to the Bible to date has been Michael Fishbane's magisterial volume Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel (1985). However, this aspect of Weingreen's teaching and writing promises to be one of his most solid contributions to scholarship - along with his renowned A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew (1939) and, especially, the remarkable number of his students who now occupy university posts throughout Ireland, Great Britain and America.

In this short paper I wish to take up Weingreen's insight and develop it along different lines with reference to the introductory colophons with which each prophetic book

in the Hebrew Bible is furnished. The case I shall argue for is that these introductions represent interpretive and creative processes at work in the construction of the text of the Bible itself. Hence what we find said about these books in the Talmud and elsewhere is not something different from what appears in the Bible but is more of the same principle at work. Many apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books do precisely the same, of which perhaps The Lives of the Prophets is the best example (cf. Hare:1985). The central argument of this paper is that there is a continuity of intention and practice between the writers of the biblical colophons and all those other writers who created the vast body of Jewish literature up to and including the Talmuds (and beyond, no doubt). There is also another argument at work in this modest paper which space will not permit to be developed at the length it deserves: the achievement of these colophons is the creation of 'historical' figures, better known as the prophets of ancient Israel. In penning these prefaces to the biblical anthologies the writers helped to invent the ancient prophets as biographical figures. This phenomenon of 'inventing tradition' is better known and understood in contemporary historical research (eg Hobsbawm & Ranger: 1983) and should, in my opinion, be applied to the interpretation of these biblical colophons. The colophons themselves are all different shapes and sizes, few are the same and a scrutiny of each one in turn (an analysis too long for this paper) would reveal structural patterns and subtle differences which might permit them to be grouped into various sets (cf. the analysis of them in relation to the growth of a canon of scripture in Tucker: 1977). Not the most studied feature of the prophetic traditions, they have been analyzed occasionally in recent years (eg Gevaryahu:1975; Lescow: 1972,61-64; Tucker:1977; the more formal conventions of scribal editing of biblical texts is discussed in Fishbane: 1985,27-32). Whether the term used to describe these introductions to the prophetic collections should be 'colophon' (Gevaryahu) or, in order to differentiate between the Babylonian scribal material (eg Lambert:1957)

and the biblical writings, 'superscription' (Fishbane, Tucker) is a moot point and hardly vital to this short study. Colophons are technically scribal markings (cf. Greek kolophon) found at the end of a book indicating details of title, date, printer etc. Such subscriptions are found in Babylonian cuneiform literature. In the Hebrew Bible they are however superscriptions which preface the books and convey information about the source (author?), date or genre of the material contained in what follows. Gevaryahu is of the opinion that originally these colophons were subscriptions but have been transferred to the beginning of each scroll or document. There is no evidence for this relocation and Gevaryahu may be wrong on this point, though it is not a serious error. Scribal remarks do appear at the end of sections in biblical books (eg. Jer.48.47b; 51;64b; Job 31.40b; cf. Eccl.12.9-12) and these show the concern of the scribes to make certain points of information clear to the reader. In each case the information is essentially technical, whereas the colophons to the prophetic books are more concerned with summaries of information or with directing the way what follows is read. These superscriptions are of a different order from the merely technical scribal notation of the ending of sections.

The simplest approach to categorizing the prophetic colophons, given the limitations of space available here, is to divide them into short and long pieces (reductionistic perhaps but, at least, not a theory-laden approach!). Short titles are to be found in Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Malachi. Yet even this simple category of 'short title' is not without problems because the book of Nahum has two titles! These are 'oracle of Nineveh book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite'. The long titles are Isa.1.1; Jer.1;1-3; Ezek.1.1-3; Hos.1.1; Amos 1.1; Mic.1.1 Zeph.1.1; Hag.1.1. and Zech.1.1. The variables among these titles require a more sophisticated analysis and a fairly large-scale grid would be required to do schematic and formal justice to them.



All the titles name a person whose work then follows in the body of the book so prefaced with the colophon. Without that naming process most of the books in the collection (made up of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Book of the Twelve) would be anonymous - that is how necessary these titles are to so many of the books! Tora and the so-called 'Former Prophets' are all anonymous works. Only wisdom books (which are essentially pseudonymous) and the 'Latter Prophets' appear to require attribution to a named source. This distinction between named and unnamed sources may reflect something of the cultural and redactional histories of the various writings in the Hebrew Bible, but space does not permit further speculation on a curious difference between Tora and prophecy. From a few of the prophetic books it might be possible to extrapolate a name (eg Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and Jonah), given that they had the form they now have when the colophons were added to them. For the rest of the collection it would not be possible to derive a name from the substance of the writings because the speakers are never identified at any point in the texts. The only exceptions to this stark absence of internal naming of the speaker are Hos.1.2-3, which may well be regarded as an editorial development of 1.1, and Ezek.24.24, which also may be seen as a redactional development of 24.15-18 by vv.19-24 (an already developed text as the switch from first person speech in vv.21-24 suggests; the commentators differ in their treatment of this section!). It is certainly a curious feature of the book of Ezekiel that such a lengthy volume should only use the name 'Ezekiel' in the colophon and one other place in the whole book! The circumlocution 'son of man' which is used throughout the book has the effect of making the central character anonymous and it may well be the case that the figure of Ezekiel is a creation of the writers of the colophon. It is also arguable that the proper name 'Malachi' is a misunderstanding of the Hebrew mal'ākī 'my messenger' and that the book is in fact a further appendix to Zech. 9-11; 12-14, themselves appendices to Zech.1-8 (all three appendices are introduced by the phrase massā' d'bar-yhwh

'oracle of the word of Yhwh'). Of course the texts here are ambiguous and it is not possible to clarify them to the point where only one meaning is the most likely reading of the text.

One obvious conclusion from the books which contain no internal use of the speaker's name is this: we cannot argue, at least not for these books, that the editors extrapolated the personal names from the body of the works they were editing. To argue that they did extrapolate from those books where the names appear internally (eg Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos 7.8,10-14; 8.2; Haggai) may also not be persuasive. In Haggai and Zechariah the names appear in the editorial framework which itself is unnecessary for understanding the oracular and visionary material constitutive of these collections. It may well be the case that the few traditions which contain narratives where the prophet's name also appears (eg Isa.7.3; 20.2-3; 37-39; Jeremiah passim) point to peculiarities of the formation of these books rather than furnish historical information about such 'named' prophets. However, if an extrapolation process is argued for with reference to these books then how did the editors acquire names for the majority of books where no such information is contained internally? Were such names handed down, known from old traditions or legends, traditionally attached to these collections, invented or what? We cannot answer such questions. We simply do not know! There are no *prima facie* data which would permit a definitive, historically reliable answer. The information in the colophons is scribal and cannot be traced further back than what we now have in the biblical texts. We may choose to regard the data afforded by these prefaces as historically accurate on grounds of respect of tradition, theological persuasion or a sanguine acceptance of what we read in old documents. But as the historicity of such colophons cannot be substantiated we may equally regard them as part extrapolation and part invention!

Not every colophon gives the same information: the only common point to all of them is the naming of the speaker

associated with what follows. Sometimes the title includes a note about the family of the speaker: eg Isaiah ben Amoz, Hosea ben Beeri, Jeremiah ben Hilkiah, Jonah ben Amittai etc. Other times a place name locates the origins of the speaker: eg Amos of Tekoa, Nahum of Elqosh, Micah of Moresheth. Ezekiel is uniquely represented as being by the river Chebar in the land of the Chaldeans when the heavens opened (he is also identified as the son of Buzi, as a priest and as being among the exiles - an overload of information?). Jeremiah is given both a location among the priests of Anathoth (cf. 'Jeremiah of Anathoth' in 29.27) and a family name. On occasion neither family name nor place of origin is mentioned: eg Habakkuk, Obadiah (an anonymous figure 'servant of Yah'?). The information in the colophons is not comprehensive nor is it uniform and such a wide range of variation may, or there again may not, indicate varying degrees of traditional knowledge available to the editors of the different collections of material. At times a colophon may use a deuteronomistic-style 'reign of kings' indication of period of activity (eg Isa.1.1; Jer.1.2-3; Amos 1.1; Amos 1.1; Mic.1.1; cf. Ezek.1.2b) and identify those to whom the words were addressed: eg to Samaria and Jerusalem (Mic.1.1), concerning Judah and Jerusalem (Isa.1.1), concerning Edom (Obad.1), concerning Israel (Amos 1.1), Nineveh (Jon.1.1; Nah.1.1). Where information is not given there is a tendency among scholars to use internal evidence from the books themselves to fill out the profiles of the prophets. Thus Isaiah ben Amoz who worked in Jerusalem according to Isa.37-39 (and by implication in 7.3-4?) is conventionally regarded as having come from Jerusalem and is therefore often referred to as 'Isaiah of Jerusalem' (sometimes to distinguish him from Second Isaiah). This may not be warranted as a glossing of Isa.1.1 and is, in many ways, a question-begging way of reading texts. It is on the same level as arguing that because Amos worked in Bethel (7.10-15) he must have come from there (1.1 would at least controvert that foolish assertion) or that Ezekiel must have been a Chaldean or Obadiah an Edomite or Nahum a man from



Nineveh (cf. Jonah). What should be noted is this: no named prophet in the prophetic traditions and no figure in the colophons is said to have come from Jerusalem! It would appear to be the case that no Jerusalemite prophet was accepted in the canon of the prophets - whether for ideological, cultural or political reasons must be left to scholarly speculation.

The Babylonian Talmud - that vast reservoir of so much discussion about everything under the sun and encyclopaedia of biblical analysis - takes the view that where a colophon does not mention the location of a prophet, that prophet should be regarded as having come from Jerusalem:

From the dictum of Ulla; for Ulla said:  
Wherever a man's name is given along with that of his father as the author of a prophecy, we know that he was a prophet son of a prophet. Where his own name is given but not that of his father, we know that he was a prophet but not the son of a prophet. Where his name and the name of his town are specified, we know that he came from that town. Where his name is given but not that of his town, we know that he was from Jerusalem. (Megillah 15a; emphasis is added)

These talmudic rulings may be regarded as reasonable hypotheses or inferences from the text, but the claim about a named prophet being from Jerusalem does not reflect any historically reliable knowledge because of the temporal distance between the biblical text and the writings in the Talmud. As a working principle the ruling may be a very useful one, but the writers of the biblical colophons were quite capable of locating the prophets in Jerusalem if they had so desired. It would therefore be unwise to allow the Talmud to preempt judgment here and predispose the reader towards assuming something to be the case when it is patently otherwise.

The organizational comprehensiveness of the Talmud is in striking contrast to the inchoate information made available in the colophons to the prophetic books, though it is arguable that both sets of writers were equally seeking to produce some order in relation to the materials they had to hand. Lacking definite information the biblical writers used whatever they knew, whether it was hearsay, legend, tradition, received information, guesswork or, in the final analysis, their own invention. It is quite clear that 'Amos of Tekoa' cannot be an extrapolation from the book of Amos, but where it comes from is now unknown - that 'Tekoa' may not be a place-name but a symbol for how kings should behave themselves (cf. the wise woman of Tekoa in 2 Sam.14) cannot be ruled out as an explanation of its occurrence in Amos 1.1 (so Silver: 1983, 161-2). But at this point in the argument the colophons become complex and coded data which render them even less intelligible than we had at first imagined and open them up to highly speculative schemes of interpretation. As scholars we do not know what is and what is not reliable historical information in these colophons and that is a judgment about historical knowledge. It does not affect the treatment of them as texts. The literariness of the prophetic traditions remains whatever evaluation we may make of their historical reliability and it is as literature that they must be interpreted. For the purposes of exegesis the information in the colophons may be treated as if it were reliable and may be used as part of the traditional representation of the various individuals whose work is believed to be embodied in the anthologies following each colophon. In this way the writers of these colophons may be credited with inventing the prophets.

The identity of the writers and editors of the prophetic books is absolutely unknown, for the colophons only attempt to identify the speakers of the words which follow they do not suggest that the speakers also wrote down their words. A few isolated strands of text

associate the speakers with writing specific parts of their work: eg Isa. 8.1; 30.8; Jer. 29.1; 30.2; 51.60; cf.36.4; Hab.2.2. Each prophetic book gives evidence of having been edited, but by person or persons unknown. A favourite candidate among modern scholars for the editorship of the books is, inevitably, the deuteronomistic circles and some such hypothesis is required to explain the existence of these collections in the first place. The deuteronomistic hypothesis has the advantage of reflecting other strands in the Hebrew Bible with a heavy bias towards prophets, partial to certain linguistic and theological styles, and with a passion for control and regulation. All other hypotheses about the origins of the prophetic collections have less warrant than deuteronomistic circles, though it should not be supposed that the theory of a deuteronomistic edition of all the prophets is a problem-free theory. By no means! However, alternative explanations have even less support for them. The view that disciples of the prophets wrote their words down is dependent upon a hypothesized belief in the existence of such disciples. It is also based on a <sup>a</sup>misunderstanding or mistranslation of the word limmudim 'disciples, taught ones' where the b<sup>e</sup> is open to a number of interpretations (Isa.8.16) and cannot be taken to imply schools of disciples who wrote their masters' words, thereby producing the prophetic canon! The metaphoric nature of the statement should warn against treating the text as a warrant for a literal understanding of it being transferred to an account of how prophecy was produced as a written phenomenon. Similar arguments about Baruch as the writer of the book of Jeremiah - a highly contentious claim itself! - cannot be used to produce a model of how other prophetic works were produced. So although many scholars talk about disciples and schools of followers of specific prophets this is only hypothetical and non-historical speculation about unknown matters. We simply do not know who collected or wrote these books or even what the connections are between the putative speakers in these traditions and the colophons which introduce



them. The different Hebrew and Greek editions of the book of Jeremiah allow us to see the diversity of possible developments of some of these prophetic books and underline our ignorance about these matters.

All this ignorance reflects a nescience which scholars might more frequently acknowledge rather than passing on as if it were knowledge! Such nescience imposes a strict focus on the literariness of the texts and a recognition of just how little we actually know about historical and social settings of the literature. It also raises the question about the nature of the colophons and the extent to which they represent editorial attempts to invent characters to whom might be attached the various collections of sayings and narratives. It is certainly the case that without these colophons we would not read what follows as the utterances of specific persons. Thus the colophons direct our gaze and focus our attention on linking the anthologies with the people named in them. Without these attributions we would not be tempted to read what follows as the output of prophets in the first place! After all, in many of these collections prophets are singled out and condemned categorically; certainly no prophet is praised in these anthologies. Occasionally we even notice that the speaker in one of these traditions deliberately differentiates between himself and the prophets; 'thus says Yhwh concerning the prophets...but as for me (in contrast to them) I am...' (Mic.3.5,8; cf. Jer.23.9-40 where the speaker makes a sharp distinction in v.9 between his own state and in vv.10-40 that of the prophets). Not that the colophons often refer to the speakers as 'prophets' (the few exceptions are Habakkuk, Haggai and Zechariah). Thus the categorization of the speakers as prophets tends to be developed at editorial and secondary levels (cf. the editorial framework and Hebrew edition of the book of Jeremiah) and the colophons provide personal names which complete the circuit of naming the prophets. Just how creative a role the colophons have played in shaping how we read the texts now is debatable, but for

historical research purposes this factor must be kept to the fore.

Space does not permit the pursuit of these second order levels of creative interpretation which have shaped how we read the text any further than this brief outline of the subject. Every scholar recognizes the secondary nature of the colophons but most do not draw the logical inference of that recognition by making allowance for a gap between preface and text. Nor is the creative aspect of the editorial constructions of the colophons given due weight in the exegesis of the text. We know from the extra-biblical literature about the prophets just how similar it is to the biblical material (eg the stories of the variegated careers of Jeremiah and Baruch are to be found in a number of writings) and that the principles and practices of the biblical and non-biblical writers are the same. Thus to some extent the colophons must be read as part of the processes whereby the multifarious traditions collected together in the prophetic anthologies were attributed to named persons and did not remain simply aggregated anonymous collections of material. The information they contain may be fragmentary and uncorroborated by external sources, but it is all there is and we must make of it what we can. Reading the prophetic texts with due consideration for the creative editorial shaping of them, especially the colophons, may make it harder to accept the traditional accounts of these books. It will certainly force the commentator to make more frequent confessions of ignorance and perplexity. But it will have the virtue of taking seriously the nature of the material under scrutiny and of recognizing that what the biblical writers were trying to do with the production of colophons was a creative act of interpretation that aimed at bringing some order into quite disordered texts. An act very similar to the talmudic rulings on how these colophons should be understood. In my commentary on Jeremiah (1986) I have tried, in the most inchoate way, to give due recognition to this principle of reading the colophon

as a late, editorial shaping of the text, rather than as an integral and historical part of the book. Such an approach needs much more analysis and application if justice is to be done to this way of reading the prophetic texts. In this brief study an outline of the matter is all that can be sustained by way of introducing a different understanding of prophecy.

Jacob Weingreen needs no encomium from me - his work speaks for itself. But it gives me great pleasure to turn aside from a busy academic life - a life to which Jacob Weingreen contributed in no small way - to write these few lines (anticipating a much larger work in progress) in celebration of one of the finest teachers of Hebrew in the British Isles in the twentieth century. He needs no praise because his pupils embody many of his virtues in academic circles throughout the world and demonstrate his seminal influence as a great teacher. This short paper is but a fragment, a token of deep respect and a heartfelt wish for a man held in great honour by his former students as he enters his eighties - along with his most faithful companion Bertha. May both of them continue to grace life for decades to come and may the Shekinah continue to be with them.

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Kevin J. Cathcart.

The interpretation of Hosea's marriage has preoccupied students of the Bible for centuries. In 1975 S. Bitter published his work Die Ehe des Propheten Hosea (Möttingen, 1975) which is a study of the history of the interpretation of Hosea's marriage in Judaism and Christianity. Because of the vast amount of material which he had to survey, his comments on the Targum are necessarily brief. In this article we shall offer a translation of certain passages in Targum Jonathan to Hosea 1-3 and offer appropriate comment with a view to giving not only the thrust of the Targumist's understanding of the text of the Hebrew scriptures but also to illustrate various targumic devices and techniques.

The Targumist's allegorical interpretation of the marriage of Hosea begins immediately in Hos 1:2:

Go and speak a prophecy against the inhabitants of the idolatrous city, who continue to sin.

For the inhabitants of the land surely go astray from the worship of the Lord.

The divine commands of MT "Go, get yourself a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom" and 3:1 "Go, love a man beloved of a companion, an adulteress" raised serious problems for rabbinic minds. How could God give such commands, especially to a prophet? The Targumist transposes the command to perform a symbolic act into a commission to prophesy. Other examples of this are found in Zech. 11:4, 15. It should be mentioned at this point that Ms p.116 of the Montefiore Library, Jews College, London (Sperber's Ms c)<sup>1</sup> has a long addition to Hos.1:2 in the form of a passage known from Pes. 87b. There the interpretation of Hosea's marriage is quite different from that of the Targum.<sup>2</sup>

Hos.1-3 So he went and prophesied concerning them that if they repented, they would be forgiven; but if not they would fall as the leaves of a fig tree fall. But they continued to do wicked deeds.

This is a considerable departure from MT which involves an homiletical interpretation that associates the proper name Diblaim of MT with Heb. dbylh, "a cake of pressed figs". Cf. b. Pes. 87b.<sup>5</sup> The principles of repentance and forgiveness so important in Judaism, are well established in the Targum.<sup>4</sup>

Hos.1:4 And the Lord said to him, "Call their name 'scattered ones' for in yet a little while I will avenge the blood of the idolators, which Jehu shed in Jezreel, when he put them to death because they had worshipped Baal. Now they themselves have turned back to go astray after the calves in Bethel. Therefore I will account it as innocent blood upon the house of Jehu and I will abolish kingship from the house of Israel.

The Targumist's apologetic effort is interesting here. According to 2 Kings 9-10, Jehu acted at the command of the Lord when he destroyed the house of Ahab, so Hos. 1:4 presents an interpretative problem which must be sorted out. This is done by various additions. Those who killed the idolators had also turned to the worship of false gods and had to be punished accordingly.

Hos.1:6 They continued to do wicked deeds, and he said to him, "Call their name 'Not pitied' because of their deeds. For I will no more have pity on the house of Israel; yet if they repent, I will surely forgive them."

The first clause is for MT "And she conceived again and bore a daughter". In line with the Targumist's allegorical interpretation, however, reference to the harlot is avoided. The meaning of the last part of the verse in MT is uncertain but whether it means "I will never again pardon them" or "on the contrary I will withdraw it from them", Targum reverses the meaning. This is close to the phenomenon of "converse translation" described by M.L. Klein.<sup>5</sup>



Hos.1:8 And their inhabitants who had been deported among the nations were forgotten, for they were not pitied because of their deeds; and they continued to do wicked deeds.

All this is for MT "After weaning 'Not pitied', she conceived and bore a son". As with v.6 the reference to the harlot is avoided. The clause "and they continued to do wicked deeds" has appeared already in vv.3 and 6.

Hos.1:9 (last part only)...because you do not fulfil the words of my law, my Memra has not been your support.

This is for MT "and I will not be your God". The Targum removes the finality of the previous words of MT "you are not my people" and the words that follow by referring to the present non-fulfilment of the law, and thereby implying that repentance will alter the situation. Targum 'wryt, "law, Torah" in this verse is the first of many references to study and fulfilment of the law in Targum to Hosea. Cf. 2:1, 3, 5, 16f.; 4:6, 14; 5:4, 6, 9; 7:16; 8:1, 12; 10:1, 12; 11:7; 13:9, 14. In the MT however, the only references are 4:6; 8:1, 12.<sup>6</sup> Now the transgression of the law appears in the next verse.

Hos.2:1 (a part only): And from the land where they were exiled among the nations, where they transgressed the law, and it was said to them, "You are not my people", they shall return and be made great.

Most of this is expansion of the biblical text, and is especially noticeable in the interpretation of MT bmqwm "instead of" as literally "in the place of", that is, in the land of exile. The punishment of exile for the transgression of the law (cf. Hos. 7:4; 10:1) will come to an end and a Messianic age will follow. There is an appropriate reference to the Davidic house in Targum to the next verse

Hos.2:4 Reprove the congregation of Israel and say to her, because she does not humble herself in my worship, my Memra will not accept her prayer, until she removes her evil deeds from before her face and the worship of idols from among her towns.

In this interpretation "harlotry" becomes "evil deeds", "adultery" is "worship of idols" and "breasts" is conveniently replaced by "towns". The view of the Targumist is that prayer is not acceptable to God if it is not accompanied by repentance. Cf. Ps. 66:18. <sup>7</sup>

Hos.2:5 Else I will remove my Shekinah from her and will take away her glory. I will make her abandoned as in former days, until she drew near to my worship. My anger will fall on her as it fell on the people of the generation that transgressed my law in the wilderness. I will make the land desolate and kill her with dearth.

The ultimate sanction and punishment on Israel for its sins is the removal of the Shekinah. It is noteworthy, however, that in the following part of the verse the Targumist is careful to qualify the threat of abandonment by observing that Israel had turned to the worship of God in earlier times, and there is at least a hint at the benefit of return. But in view of what is said in the previous verse about the unacceptability of prayer without repentance, one must assume that in the present verse return to worship implies repentance.

Hos.2:7 (first part): For their congregation has gone astray after false prophets, their teachers are ashamed.

As in v.4 "your mother" is interpreted as "the congregation of Israel". But the Targumist derives MT hwrtn, "she that conceived them" from the root yrh, "teach"; cf. mwrh, "teacher".

Hos. 2:9 (second part): Then she will say, "I will go and return to the worship of my former Master, for it was better for me when I was worshipping before him; from now on I will not worship idols .

In line with its interpretation Targum substitutes "Master" for "husband" of the MT. This includes naturally the insertion of the typical Targumic term plhn , "worship", "service", whose role can be illustrated further by passages like 2:5 and 14:3 ("Return to the worship of the Lord"). Thus the clear statement of the rejection of idol-worship indicates complete repentance and a promise not to sin in the future.<sup>8</sup>

Hos.2:11 Therefore my Memra will return to curse the grain at the time of its harvest, and the wine at the time of its pressing. And I will remove the clothing of fine wool and linen which I gave to her to cover her shame.

Not unexpectedly, the Targumist uses the Memra device but takes Heb. šwb literally as "return" (MT 'šwb means "I will take back").<sup>9</sup> According to b. Ber. 35b, to take in corn as commanded in Deut. 11:4 was fulfilment of the will of God. But God takes back the corn when his will has not been fulfilled, for corn belongs to him. "Fine wool" and "linen" already appear in v.7. Targum myl', "fine wool" denotes wool from Miletus. Because of its quality it was much sought after throughout the Roman Empire. Note that in the LXX the "wool" and "flax" of the MT become "clothes" and "linen", and at Ezek 28:18 Heb. šmr hr ("white wool") becomes "wool from Miletus".

Hos.3:1 The Lord said to me again, "Go and prophesy a prophecy concerning the house of Israel, who are like a woman loved by her husband, but she betrays him. And just as he loves her and does not wish to send her away, so does the Lord love the people of Israel, although they turn



after the idols of the nations. However, if they repent, they will be forgiven and they shall be like a man who made a mistake and said something while intoxicated with wine.

This is a considerable expansion of the Hebrew text, but the problems of interpretation which this verse raised for the Targumist have already been noted in the comments on 1:2. However, a further point of interest is the significance of the words "while intoxicated with wine" which render Aramaic bhmryh (lit. "in his wine"). From this it is clear that the misdeed of Israel is classified as a "sin of ignorance".

Hos.3:2 And I redeemed them by my Memra on the fifteenth day of the month of Nisan, and I gave the silver shekel as atonement for them, and I said that they should bring before me the omer of the offering from the produce of barley.

The Targumist interprets "fifteen" (in the phrase "fifteen shekels of silver") as referring to the date of the Exodus from Egypt, that is, the fifteenth of Nisan. Cf. b.Hull 92a; Num. Rab. 13:20.

It is hoped that this examination of selected verses of the Targum to Hos 1-3 has illustrated in some way how the Targumist dealt with a text like this.

#### NOTES:

1. A. Sperber, The Bible in Aramaic (4 vols. Brill, 1959-1973).
2. Cf. L. Smolar and M. Aberbach, Studies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets (New York, 1983).
3. Smolar and Aberbach, Studies 216.
4. Smolar and Aberbach, Studies 210-221.
5. "Converse Translation: A Targumic Technique," Biblica 57 (1976) 515-537.

6. Cf. P. Churgin, Targum Jonathan to the Prophets (New Haven, 1927) 122f.; B.D. Chilton, The Glory of Israel (Sheffield, 1983) 13-18; Smolar and Aberbach, Studies 159-164 ("Torah and Good Deeds").
7. Cf. Smolar and Aberbach, Studies 167, 211.
8. Smolar and Aberbach, Studies 211.
9. Cf. H.W. Wolff, Hosea (Philadelphia, 1974) 31.

## EXEGETICAL PROBLEMS IN QOHELETH

Robert B. Salters

With the possible exception of the Song of Songs, the book of Ecclesiastes (or Qoheleth), is unique in the Old Testament in having been interpreted in a variety of ways, some of these in direct opposition to others. In the past hundred years, for example, it has been described, on the one hand, as "Das Hohelied der Skepsis" by Heinrich Heine<sup>1</sup>, while at the other end of the scale Franz Delitzsch considered it to be "Das Hohelied der Gottesfurcht"<sup>2</sup>. Earlier this century M. Jastrow Jr.<sup>3</sup> gave his commentary on it the title "A gentle Cynic" and, more recently, H.W. Hertberg<sup>4</sup> has gone so far as to describe it as "...die erschütterndste messianische Weissagung, die das Alte Testament aufzuweisen hat". These quotations draw attention to the extremes of opinion held as to the book and its contents.

It should not be thought, however, that this variety of opinion is merely the result of the critical scholarship of the 19th and 20th centuries. It might be said that the book of Ecclesiastes has divided scholarly opinion throughout its existence, and the controversy which accompanied the inclusion of the book in the Jewish canon (c. 100 A.D.), a summary of which is recorded in the Midrashim and Talmud, simply underlines this. This division among the Rabbis throws into relief just where the problems of interpretation lie; in effect one side is saying that the orthodox and pious statements in the book modify and control the unorthodox, while the other side claims that the scepticism is of the essence of Qoheleth and remains over against the pious statements to be found there. The former views won the day and Ecclesiastes found a place in the canon, partly because it was believed that Solomon was the author, partly because of the existence of these pious statements, and

partly because certain exegetical principles employed at that time could render the sceptical and unorthodox statements harmless, and even pious. Long after Jamnia (c.100 A.D.) there were those who felt that Ecclesiastes ought to have been relegated to the Apocrypha because, they felt, the orthodox and unorthodox could not be sufficiently reconciled.

Many of the problems which Ecclesiastes affords will be familiar to the reader, and in any case they are too numerous to be dealt with on this occasion in their entirety. I shall therefore confine myself largely to the passage 11.9-12.1

There is a school of thought these days which seeks to encourage us to approach the text of the Hebrew bible only as canonical literature, as the book of the synagogue or of the church, and so to interpret it. We are reminded that in the so-called pre-critical period the attitude to the text was basically accepting, and consequently fruitful, and that we need to recover something of that stance. While there may be something to be said for this approach in that the literature has come to us as the religious literature of the synagogue or church - and it helps us to understand those early commentators if we keep this in mind - yet there are disadvantages which must be recognised. If, for example, the lessons of the prophets were not learned or were inadequately perceived by collectors or editors, the juxtaposition of oracles, historical notes etc. may reflect this and the redactor's interpretation may thereby be responsible for our misunderstanding of a particular saying. One of the tasks of the scholar must be to attempt as far as possible a recovery of such oracles and contexts, while acknowledging and interpreting the views of the collectors and canonisers.

The book of Ecclesiastes, in spite of disputes about its status, became officially regarded as scripture by



Judaism and Christianity, and was interpreted accordingly. Thus among the early commentators in the Talmud, Qoheleth Rabbah, Yalkut Shemoni and the medieaval commentators, among the Greek and Latin fathers and in the ancient versions the book appears as holy writ, a work of piety, whose author, thought to be Solomon, was concerned to direct our attention away from earthly matters to heavenly ones.

As far as 11.9–12.1 is concerned the tendency was to see this as a warning not to gratify one's desires when young but to put away evil and to honour the Judge, our Creator.

We should observe, however, that this group of writings comes from those who, in some way, represent the official standpoint of synagogue and church. This was not the whole story, and here and there in the history of interpretation we may detect a certain uneasiness about Ecclesiastes, both about the book as a whole and about specific passages.

We have already alluded to the controversy surrounding the book, and I want to pick up now six references which give an indication of this. In the Talmud (B.Tal. Meg. 7a) it is recorded that the rival schools of Hillel and Shammai were divided as to the status of Ecclesiastes, Shammai maintaining that it was not inspired scripture, Hillel maintaining that it was, though no specific examples are given. Then there is a reference to scholars who claimed that the author of the book had contradicted himself in places, and that it was therefore unsuitable to rank along with other established holy books. (B.Tal. Shab. 30). Thirdly, in the Midrashic collections, Qoheleth Rabbah (1.3; 11.9) and Yalkut Shemoni (11.9), allusion is made to wise men who tried to suppress the book because of heretical statements found there. Except for the views of Shammai and Hillel, it is difficult to date these statements, but it is

likely that they arose in connection with the discussions concerning the canon. Fourthly, as late as the 4th century A.D., Jerome<sup>5</sup> refers to Jewish scholars who hold that "the book ought to be suppressed because it asserts that all God's creation is vain, and regards everything as empty, preferring eating, drinking and transient pleasures before everything else". Jerome himself, it should be noted, is enthusiastic about Ecclesiastes and disagrees with this viewpoint which he quotes. In the preface to his commentary on it he declares that he read the book to a devout young woman from Rome, Blessila, in order to encourage her to despise this present age. He does not say with what result!

The Christian church seems to have been reluctant to comment on the book for quite some time, and this very reluctance gives us yet another indication of the underlying negative attitudes to the book. It is one of the few O.T. books not mentioned in N.T., which is odd if it is a Messianic prophecy as Hertzberg would have us believe. And it is late 3rd century A.D. before a Christian commentary appears at all, that of Gregory<sup>6</sup> (Thaumaturgus) whose dates are 210-270.

Finally, in the light of Barthélemy's conclusion<sup>7</sup> that the Septuagint of Ecclesiastes is in fact the work of Aquila, the question arises as to whether there ever was an Alexandrian translation of the book. It is just possible that the book had not become fully accepted in Alexandria prior to the debates on its canonicity, and since the Septuagint as a whole had fallen into disrepute in Jewish circles, owing to its association with the Christian church, and Aquila was being encouraged to produce an entirely new translation, the gap was not subsequently filled by Alexandrian scholars<sup>8</sup>.

It may be that we should infer from these examples of a certain disenchantment with the book, that the

opposition to it as scripture was much greater than is immediately suggested – remembering that the examples are given by those who had accepted Ecclesiastes as canonical. We might also infer that the era was not as uncritical as is sometimes assumed.

Over and above the question whether the book as a whole was worthy of scripture, there were a number of specific passages which occasioned some uneasiness – verses such 1.3; 2.24; 6.2; 11.9; to name but a few – and a long hard look was needed before such passages could be interpreted in a manner which satisfied the would-be exegetes.

1.3 reads “What advantage has a man in exchange for all his toil in which he engages under the sun?” and it is recorded in the Midrash that objections were raised to the implications of this passage. The conclusion is drawn that the author cannot surely have meant all toil. Fixing on the possessive pronoun ‘his’, one argument given is that the phrase עמלו ‘his toil’ refers to secular toil but excludes the toil connected with (the study of) the Torah. Another way of looking at it is that toil ‘under the sun’ has to do with worldly effort, whereas there is no questioning of toil ‘above the sun’ i.e. religious striving.

So confident are the exegetes of their conclusions that this passage is actually quoted in the Talmud in support of the book’s canonical status (B.Tal. Shab. 30b). “The book ends with the words of Torah: Fear God... and it begins, with words of Torah: What advantage...”

This kind of interpretation raises the question of the nature of the exegetical climate before and during the discussions on the status of Qoheleth. Midrashic exegesis, such as we have just observed, is to be found in many of the early commentaries and seems to have been acceptable in the pre-Christian era. Paul resorts to it in

his discussion of the 'seed' in Gal. 3.16. R. Akiba (c. 50–132 A.D.), the father of Rabbinic Judaism, is said to have been adept at extracting masses of exegetical material, allegedly latent in the text of the Bible (Genesis Rabbah 1:1; 4:1; 21:20) even to the point of pronouncing exegetically on the sign of the definite accusative **אח**, and we know that he was influenced in this by a predecessor, a certain Nahum of Gimzo<sup>9</sup>.

We must not think, however, that exegesis was completely dominated by these methods. Those who raised objections to Ecclesiastes being accepted as scripture did so on the basis of literal interpretations of the passages in question. Furthermore, there is the ancient Talmudic injunction **אין מקרא יוצא מירי פשוטו** 'a text cannot lose its plain meaning' (B.Tal. Shab. 63a). Again, there is the statement by a rabbi of the second century, R. Judah who said, "He who translates a biblical verse literally is a liar but he who elaborates on it is a blasphemer." (B.Tal. Kid. 49a) The way of the translator is hard! It is true R. Judah is not speaking specifically of exegesis, but in his comments he shows an interest in such careful rendering of a passage as to betray a concern for the plain sense. His polemic against literal translation may reflect opposition to a slavishly literal rendering such as that of Aquila. Nevertheless although there are these indications of an interest in the plain sense the point is that where Midrashic exegesis is possible there is the danger of a text being totally or partially misunderstood.

This can be illustrated by considering Eccles. 3.15. At the end of the verse<sup>10</sup> is a clause **והאלהים יבקש אח נרדף** which is elucidated by the Vulgate "and God repeats what has vanished", and this interpretation has been adopted by Ibn Ezra, the A.V. and most commentators since. But the phrase appears almost word for word in Gen Sira 5.3 where the passage is "Do not say, Who shall revail over me? For God seeks **נרדפים**". All the versions



here (including V) take this term to mean 'the persecuted', and it has to be allowed that this is what it must mean in this passage. It cannot have this meaning however in Eccles. 3.15, but this does not prevent the versions (apart from the Vulgate) and the Midrash interpreting it, as in Ben Sira, 'God seeks the persecuted'. What characterises these versions in this instance is that they all isolate the text from the context, and find a meaning which cannot be reconciled either with what goes before or what comes after.

This disregard for context is often apparent in the exegesis of the Midrashic literature in general. It seems that this kind of exegesis of Ecclesiastes was tolerated, if not popular, at least as early as c. 200 B.C. (Ben Sira).

It was the combination of Midrashic interpretation on the one hand, and the viewing of the book as canonical literature on the other hand, which made it impossible for Qoheleth's sceptical notes to be heard. Rashi's grandson, Rashbam, who made a conscious and explicit attempt to abandon the Midrashic approach in favour of the literal one, is hampered by the fact that he can only approach the book as holy writ. The most he can do is to suggest an editorial framework for the book<sup>11</sup> and lay bare some of the author's scepticism, especially in the first chapters.

If we look at 11.9 and at the history of its interpretation we can get a clearer picture of what is involved. This verse which is one of the most controversial in the book, is part of a passage 11.7-12.8 in which the author points out that since we do not know what lies ahead in life we should get on with the business of living; old age, misfortune and death come soon enough. It would seem that from verse 9 onwards his concern is with youth, and there is considerable urgency in his tone as he advises the young man to enjoy life to the full while he is young. In this advice he

employs words from Num. 15.39 where Yahweh instructs Moses to say to the Israelites: '...you shall remember all the LORD'S commands to obey them, and not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, which you are inclined to go after wantonly.' Qoheleth's words are: 'Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes.' And then we have a further statement, 'But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgement.'

Leaving aside the modern period of exegesis, and beginning with Mendelssohn's commentary of 1770 and working backwards, we can get a glimpse at how this passage has been interpreted.

Mendelssohn comments at length on this verse<sup>12</sup>. He recognises that the passage in Num. 15.39 is being included to, but he cannot accept that Qoheleth is encouraging what Moses prohibited and is at pains to show that it is the middle course which is being advocated, and avoidance of excess: that the message is to walk in the ways of the heart and in the sight of the eyes without being guilty of sin. It is clear that Mendelssohn's view of the text as scripture prevents him taking a more straightforward look at Qoheleth's words.

Luther was obviously troubled by the verse. He does not appear to recognise the link with the Numbers passage but he does admit 'that it sounds almost like something evil to say that someone walks in the ways of his heart.' Luther finds escape in the suggestion that the verse has a touch of irony. Whatever 9a may mean, the recollection that God will bring him into judgement will prevent him from sinning<sup>13</sup>.

Andrew of St Victor (12th cent.) comes to much the same conclusion<sup>14</sup>, except that he does not require the final clause about God's judgement to come to the

rescue. לִבְךָ וְיִשְׁכַּח for him means 'let your heart be well intentioned', hence to walk in the ways of your heart is tantamount to saying 'walk in the ways of your good heart'. The phrase 'in the sight of your eyes' is taken to mean 'your mind's eyes', that is, reason. Hence the advice is: Rejoice while you are young; live according to the dictates of your well-intentioned heart and reason.

Nicolaus de Lyra (1270–1340) on the other hand, observes<sup>15</sup> that the advice to 'walk in the sight of your eyes' is evil advice, and concludes that the author is being ironic. It is like a father who says to his son, 'Go home and drink and play' meaning 'you will suffer afterwards.' And this is virtually the same example as is given by Rashi, who, along with Ibn Ezra and Rashbam, seems to be of the opinion that the words 'walk in... eyes' is advice to sin, but that the final clause referring to God's inevitable judgement, rescues the passage from the charge of heresy.

There is nothing in the Vulgate rendering to reveal the translator's views, but in his commentary on Ecclesiastes, Jerome argues<sup>16</sup> that while the first half of verse 9 advises pleasure to the full, the second half pulls away the rug from under the feet of the would-be pleasure-seeker by making a reference to the final judgement. (It is interesting, however, to note that in the translation offered by Jerome at this point, there appear in two MSS of the commentary, two additional words after the phrase 'and the sight of your eyes' namely, *sine reprehensione* – 'without reproof' or 'without blame'.<sup>17</sup>)

The Targumist is very paraphrastic. He is also homiletically motivated and is concerned to remove anything which appears unconventional in the text. The translation of his rendering is: 'Rejoice, young man while you are young, and let your heart be cheerful in your youth, and walk in humility with the ways of you



heart, and be careful as to what your eyes see, and do not look on evil, and know that for all these things the Lord will bring you into judgement.' It is not clear whether the Targumist considered the verse ironic. What is clear is that he was anxious that the first half of the verse should not be interpreted in any way other than that which conformed to the sentiments of Num. 15.39. This means that there was a real danger that it might be so interpreted. The Septuagint, normally an extremely literal rendering in Ecclesiastes, deviates from MT in two important respects. For 'walk in the ways of your heart' we have 'walk in ways blameless', and for 'and in the sight of your eyes' we have 'and not in the sight of your eyes'. The translator has obviously been unable to suppress his presuppositions. Again, we cannot be certain as to how he understood the function of the final clause in the Hebrew, but it is clear that he felt that his usual literal rendering would be inadequate at this point. And he was not content with a free translation either. He found it impossible to let these words go unchecked: to him they advocated the gratification of desire, and he was unable to believe that scripture could make such suggestions.

It is not surprising that Qoheleth Rabbah maintains a similar attitude to this passage. It is at this point (11.9) that reference is made to the objection to the book: 'Wise men sought to suppress the book of Qoheleth because they found there things which lead to heresy...' Num. 15.39 is quoted in part, the implication being that Qoheleth (=Solomon) seems to contradict it, and the objection continues, 'the restriction has been removed; there is no judgement and no judge'. This objection is only introduced into the Midrash in order that it may be countered, and Qoheleth Rabbah continues, 'since he said: But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgement, Solomon has spoken well.'



These remarks are followed by five parables told by various Rabbis to demonstrate that everything hinges on the final clause in the verse and that it is pointless to engage in waywardness if, in the end of the day, judgement is certain.

There follow other interpretations which concentrate on the first half of the verse. 'In your youth' means 'in the Torah which you studied in your youth', 'in the days of your youth' means 'in the Mishnah' and 'walk in.. eyes' is a reference to the Talmud.

The cumulative remarks in the Midrash Rabbah indicate that there were three schools of thought. Firstly, there were those who regarded the speech as ironic. Then there were those who objected to the book on the grounds that Qoheleth was urging behaviour prohibited in Num. 15.39. Their statement 'restriction has been removed; there is no judgement and no judge' demonstrates that they are unable to accept the point of view which takes the passage as ironic. Did they suspect that the final clause was not from the hand of Qoheleth? Did they feel that 9a was of the essence of the author and that 9b did not ring true in the context? We are not told. In fact there is no discussion of that final clause by those who object to the first half of the verse. The objection hardly makes sense with the text as we have it, "there is no judgement and no judge". The question arises whether the initial objection to the passage arose at a time when the final clause was not in the text.

Thirdly, there are those who seem unable to trust the ironic interpretation and who feel that 9a itself has either to be altered or explained away in fanciful exegesis. In the Midrash Rabbah they are represented by those who see references to Torah, Mishnah and Talmud in the first half of the verse, but the addition and alterations to the text in Jerome's commentary, the Septuagint and Targum were made by those who ma

have been of like mind. Is the final clause an addition of the same genre as those in the Septuagint? The suggestion that 9b is an addition has been made before – there is nothing new under the sun – but it was on the ground that Qoheleth's remarks elsewhere precluded these sentiments.

In the light of these considerations, it would seem that v.10 was originally a direct continuation of 9a, and its two imperatives are part of the chain of imperatives which began with שׁמח (v9). The motive clause is then clearly seen as 10b.

Taken together, it is clear that the urgency with which v.9 began is continued in v.10 and the reason for that urgency is given. The young man is further advised to remove anxiety from his mind and to banish trouble from his body. The reason this advice is urgently offered to the young is that youth will soon pass away.

But the early interpreters, faced with 9a, 9b and 10, were inclined to interpret differently, chiefly because the context was different for them, and the presence of a few ambiguous terms and a *hapax legomenon* made their guidelines confusing.

The two statements in 10a receive a moralising treatment at the hands of all the Versions. Hence the translation is "Remove anger from your mind and evil from your flesh", and Jerome<sup>18</sup>, in his commentary, explains that the evil of the flesh signifies carnal pleasures in general. It is interesting to note that Luther<sup>19</sup> takes this advice as meaning "Put away pain from your body", but he is an exception, and the tendency to interpret these injunctions as warnings following on from 9b rather than as the continuing urgency of 9a<sup>20</sup>.

The word שׁחור, taken by T as related to שׁחזר "to be black", and to refer to early manhood, the time of black

hair, was not recognised by LXX, P or V. The Septuagint, possibly baffled by the *hapax legomenon*, translates it "folly", and this is blindly followed by P and Jerome (V) who is obviously uncertain about the term and who, in his commentary, renders it "pleasure". The translators, unable to suppress their presuppositions, guessed at a word which seemed to them to characterise youth. They were also of the opinion that הבל, the predicate of the motive clause, meant "emptiness" or "purposelessness", whereas it had there the meaning 'fleeting' as is recognised later by Nicolaus de Lyra, and after him, Mendelssohn<sup>21</sup>.

It seems, therefore, that in the interpretation of these verses a great deal turns on the question of the authenticity of 9b.

There is one further matter (in 12.1) which has been influenced by the attention given to these verses. In the great bulk of the history of the interpretation<sup>22</sup> of this verse the clause, "Remember your Creator..." was treated simply and without anxiety. The meaning was straightforward: the young man was being encouraged to honour God while young, and this might help him to reflect on the last things.

With the rise of Biblical criticism this clause came under closer scrutiny and it was felt by some to be suspect, although all the ancient Versions support MT. It was argued that if the clause was original, the latter part of the verse, 'before the evil days come...' must carry the suggestion that a time will come when you are unable to remember the Creator. If, on the other hand 12b is original the first clause is most likely to have contained an exhortation to find enjoyment while there is yet time. The injunction to remember God is irrelevant at this point since no time limits have been imposed for this activity.



It was also argued that Qoheleth's word for God was consistently אלהים, and that there is no apparent reason for him to use a different word at this point. Hence the clause was seen as from the pen of a glossator.<sup>23</sup> However, it might equally well be asked why a glossator would choose to use the term 'your Creator' in this context; the alternative is to take a closer look at the term itself.

In the Jerusalem Talmud (Sotah 2) and elsewhere, (including Rashi *ad loc*) there are references to one R. Akabiah, whose dates are not certain but who may have lived 30 B.C. or earlier, and who is said to have derived three ideas from the one word: בוראך — the King of Kings before whom you shall give account and reckoning...; בארך — the worm and the maggot; בורך — the malodorous secretion.

With this sort of exegesis surrounding the book at such an early date — prior to any of the ancient versions — it is possible (and I am not myself convinced at this point that this is the answer) that this term which seems awkward in the context is a corruption of בריך from ברי, meaning 'health, vigour'<sup>24</sup>. "Remember your vigour in the days of your youth...". It is possible that the present reading is due to the methods of exegesis already referred to, in a text whose status and wording was not yet fixed, combined with the tension occasioned by the words of Qoheleth in the previous verses. The advice to remember one's vigour when young, follows more naturally in this context than "Remember your Creator...". It is the kind of advice one might have expected from Qoheleth and it finds an echo in the injunction in Ben Sira 26.19, "My son, guard your health in the bloom of your youth."

The original author of this book would smile at the title 'Ecclesiastes' if it means as Jerome says it means, 'preacher'. But it was only the preacher — Qoheleth in



orthodox dress – which could find a place in the canon, not Qoheleth the sceptic. Although it is important that we continue to attempt to recover his words from the text, we should also keep in mind that without the glossators, the Midrashic exegetes and the canonisers, the book would have been lost to us. The Preacher has provided the means of survival for the sceptic.

It is with pleasure and gratitude that I contribute to this volume in honour of Professor Weingreen, who, many years ago, inspired in me, and in many others, a love of Hebrew and a fascination for the Hebrew Bible.

#### FOOTNOTES:

1. See F. Delitzsch, "Auslegung des Buches Koheleth" BK 1875 p.190; cf. S. Holm-Nielsen, "On the Interpretation of Qoheleth in Early Christianity" VT XXIV 1974 p.168.
2. *ibid.*
3. M.Jastrow Jr., A Gentle Cynic, 1919
4. H.W. Hertzberg, "Der Prediger" KAT, Band XVII/ 4, 1963, p.238.
5. cf. Jerome, "Commentarius in Ecclesiasten", MPL, 23, 1172
6. C.D. Ginsburg, Cohleleth, 1861, p.99.;
7. D. Barthélemy, "Les Devanciers d'Aquila", VT, 10, 1963
8. Cf. S. Holm-Nielsen, "The Book of Ecclesiastes and the Interpretation of it in Jewish and Christian Theology", ASTI X 1975/6 pp.57f.
9. Cf. Genesis Rabbah 1:1; 4:1; 21:20.
10. See my "A Note on the Exegesis of Ecclesiastes 3:15b" ZAW 88 1976 pp.419–422.
11. S. Japhet and R.B.Salters(eds.) The Commentary of R. Samuel ben Meir on Qoheleth, 1985 pp.34f.,92f.

12. M. Mendelssohn, Megillath Sepher Qoheleth, 1770 *ad loc.*
13. M. Luther, "Annotationes in Ecclesiasten" (1532) Luthers Werke, Band 20, 1898 p.191.
14. P.G. Callandra, De Historica Andreae Victorini Expositione in Ecclesiasten, 1948 p.55.
15. Textus Biblie cum Glosa Ordinaria Nicolai de Lyra, III, 1520, 353b.
16. *op. cit.* 1160f.
17. *ibid.* 1160 n.7; cf. LXX.
18. *ibid.* 1161.
19. *op. cit.* p.192.
20. Cf. AV "Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart and put away evil from thy flesh..."
21. *op. cit. ibid.*
22. Langton placed the chapter divider at 11:9; it was later moved to the present position, probably because it was felt that the statement makes a break with what precedes. This move, however, has had a great influence on the subsequent interpretation of the passage.
23. Cf. D.C. Siegfried, "Prediger und Hoheslied" HAT 1898 p.73f.
24. Cf. H.L. Ginsberg, Koheleth, 1961 p.129.



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